

and it rejects violence. The Bahá'í faith is practiced today by more than 5 million people around the world, roughly 300,000 of whom still live in Iran.

But rather than celebrate its own religious history, the Iranian regime considers the Bahá'í faith to be a heresy and brutally represses its practitioners. The regime routinely seizes personal property from members of the Bahá'í community, denies them access to education and employment opportunities, and detains them based solely on their religious beliefs. According to some reports, more than 600 Bahá'ís have been arrested since 2004. The American Bahá'í community counts 115 Bahá'ís currently in Iranian prisons and another 437 awaiting trial, appeal, sentencing, or for their sentence to begin.

Five years ago, the Iranian regime arrested seven leaders of the Bahá'í community—Fariba Kamalabadi, Jamaloddin Khanjani, Afif Naeimi, Saeid Rezaie, Mahvash Sabet, Behrouz Tavakkoli, and Vahid Tizfahm—and detained them in Iran's notorious Evin prison. Iranian leaders accused the seven of espionage for Israel, insulting religious sanctities, and propaganda against the Islamic Republic.

These seven have since faced sham trials in kangaroo courts. One of their lawyers, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi, reported difficultly establishing basic, meaningful access to counsel. She also stated that the regime had no evidence against the accused and that their trial was riddled with irregularities. Despite these concerns the regime sentenced all seven to 20 years in prison in 2010.

I and many others found these sentences unconscionable and said so at the time. Imagine being sentenced to prison because your faith recognized the divine origin of the world's great religions, the oneness of the human race, and the equality of men and women. Imagine losing 20 years of your life because somebody objected to your personal beliefs.

For the Iranian regime, I am sorry to say, this is more business as usual. This religious persecution is hardly limited to the Bahá'ís either. In fact, since 1999 the State Department has designated Iran as a "country of particular concern" for its human rights record. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom's 2012 annual report cited the regime for engaging in "systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom, including prolonged detention, torture, and executions based primarily or entirely upon the religion of the accused." The report goes on to state that "even the recognized non-Muslim religious minorities protected under Iran's constitution—Jews, Armenian and Assyrian Christians, and Zoroastrians—faced increasing discrimination, arrests, and imprisonment."

The Iranian regime must stop its assault on religious expression and free-

dom of conscience, and there is no better day to do so than this sad and dubious anniversary. I call upon Iran's rulers to immediately release the seven Bahá'í leaders and all other prisoners held on account of their beliefs. I also want to urge my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring S. Res. 75, introduced by Senators KIRK and DURBIN. This resolution condemns the Iranian regime for its state-sponsored persecution of its Bahá'í minority and for its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights, to which Iran is a party.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE MAINE TROOP GREETERS

• Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, on May 18, Americans will join together in observance of Armed Forces Day to thank the men and women of our military for their courageous and dedicated service to our Nation. This occasion has a special significance in my home State, as it marks the 10th anniversary of a remarkable group of patriots called the Maine Troop Greeters.

The story of the Maine Troop Greeters is that of hundreds of patriotic citizens who, since May of 2003, have gathered at Bangor International Airport to greet every single flight carrying our military personnel across the Atlantic to Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, or other overseas assignments or bringing them home. Whether these flights land at Bangor in the light of day or the dark of night, in fair weather or foul, the Troop Greeters are there with cookies and coffee, cheers and songs, and handshakes and hugs.

It is the story of more than 1.3 million servicemembers and nearly 350 military dogs who have landed in Bangor on some 6,700 flights. Without exception, our troops have been astonished, overwhelmed, encouraged, and most of all, welcomed and thanked by this spontaneous outpouring of gratitude and respect.

Bangor's tradition of greeting troop flights began long before 2003. On a frigid March morning in 1991, a large group of grateful Mainers came to the airport to welcome home returning troops from Operation Desert Storm. One of those soldiers, MSG Kevin Tillman of Kentucky, borrowed a saxophone from a high school musician and performed a spine-tingling rendition of our national anthem. It was a moment that electrified America.

To underscore the powerful and lasting impact of the Maine Troop Greeters, Master Sergeant Tillman returned to Bangor in 2011, 20 years after that unforgettable moment, to perform in concert with our high school band.

I am often asked by my Senate colleagues why this Troop Greeter phenomenon is so powerful in Bangor. It is not just that the city I am proud to call home is the location of the east-

ernmost airport in the United States, a former Air Force base that can accommodate transatlantic flights. For many of our troops, Bangor is either the last American soil they touch upon deployment or the first they touch upon their return.

That simple answer only scratches the surface. The phenomenon of the Maine Troop Greeters is not merely a matter of geography and facilities but the manifestation of a caring community and of the American spirit. Throughout our Nation's history, young Americans have left the comfort and security of home to defend our freedom and to extend the blessing of freedom to others. And behind patriots in uniform have stood patriots at home to honor their service.

The Maine Troop Greeters are individuals acting out of personal conviction, but their efforts are magnified by the support of local businesses, civic organizations, and the Bangor International Airport. Their generosity strengthens the spirit of volunteerism that is a core American value.

One of the principles of true service is that it is not something that is done only when convenient but a commitment sincerely made and faithfully kept. That is the principle that guides our men and women in uniform and that guides those who honor and support them.

It has been said that it is easy to take for granted that which has never been taken away. Thanks to the veterans who served in the past, America has never lost its freedom. Thanks to those who serve today, we never will. Armed Forces Day reminds us of the high price some pay for what we all cherish, and the Maine Troop Greeters exemplify the gratitude all Americans share.●

RECOGNIZING THE MAINE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

• Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I am delighted to commend the Maine School of Science and Mathematics, MSSM, of Limestone, ME, on being recognized among the best high schools in our country. MSSM was recently awarded an outstanding 13th-place ranking among more than 21,000 public high schools included in the 2013 U.S. News and World Report national rankings on school achievement. I would like to engage my fellow Senator from Maine in saluting this accomplishment, which makes us both proud.

This award recognizes that MSSM students achieve at the highest level academically. MSSM is a top-performing school on State-required assessments, and staff at the school use assessments throughout the academic year as a tool for improving and customizing instruction. The school's faculty works closely with students to forge a strong school community where students are encouraged to pursue their interests.

I applaud the students who are working hard to excel and in doing so, making their families, communities, and State proud. I also want to commend the administrators, teachers, and staff of MSSM who are succeeding in their mission to generate confidence and momentum for learning. They are making a difference in the lives of their students and are helping them reach their full potential as independent, responsible learners and engaged citizens.

I am pleased that the U.S. News and World Report has recognized the achievements of the Maine School of Science and Mathematics, and I congratulate the entire community for this outstanding achievement. Having grown up in Northern Maine, I could not be more proud of what these students and this faculty have achieved.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I wish to associate myself with the comments of the senior senator from Maine. I too am proud to congratulate the Maine School of Science and Mathematics, MSSM, for its 13th-place showing in this year's U.S. News and World Report on high school rankings. In addition, U.S. News ranked MSSM first in New England and third in the United States among magnet schools. This impressive achievement is a testament to the exceptional caliber of the school's students, faculty, and staff.

Founded by the Maine State Legislature in 1995, MSSM is a residential magnet school that specializes in science and mathematics education. It is the only school of its kind in New England. MSSM serves a diverse student body made up of young people from across the State of Maine and around the world. Graduates of MSSM are prepared for rigorous postsecondary programs and have gone on to notable success in fields as diverse as academia, engineering, public service, and the military.

It bears mentioning that when the school was proposed during my first year as governor, I was opposed to funding it for budgetary reasons. During a time of fiscal restraint, I was uncertain of the wisdom in devoting funds to a new school. Boy, was I wrong—MSSM has become a real gem, and I have never been so glad to have been wrong.

The U.S. News ranking reflects the school's ongoing commitment to excellence. Just last year, MSSM entered into a learning partnership with the University of Maine at Presque Isle that affords MSSM students the opportunity to earn college credit for select coursework. This collaborative approach is precisely the kind of innovative thinking that forges connections between high schools and postsecondary institutions and ensures that students are able to envision clear educational pathways for themselves.

The world-class education offered in Limestone would not be possible without the talented teachers, administrators, and staff who have fostered a genuine community of learning and explo-

ration and who have dedicated themselves to educating the next generation of innovative and well-rounded scholars. The foundation of any successful school lies in the dedication of its staff, and I commend the many individuals who lead and support this outstanding institution.

In its 18 years of existence, MSSM has become a point of pride for the residents of Limestone and for the whole State of Maine. I am delighted to offer my hearty congratulations to all members of the MSSM community, and I look forward to hearing of the school's continued success in the years to come.●

COMMENDING UTAH'S ACADEMY NOMINEES

● Mr. LEE. Madam President, today I wish to recognize eight exemplary Utahns and future officers in the U.S. military. Each of them will begin their education at a military academy this fall.

Jonson Henry, graduating from Park City High School, will be attending the Naval Academy. An accomplished runner, he was captain of his cross-country team and participated in track and field. He is an avid outdoorsman and an accomplished musician. He was also an AP Scholar with Distinction.

Phillip Lowry, a Weber High School graduate, will be attending the Naval Academy. Phillip was an Eagle Scout, captain of his rugby team, and accomplished in Jujitsu and mixed martial arts. He was also an accomplished musician and an AP Distinguished Scholar. His father is currently Active Duty with the Army and is serving in Afghanistan.

Amanda Ley, from Viewmont High School and Northwestern Preparatory School, will be attending the Air Force Academy. Amanda was a member of the National Honor Society and earned her Academic Letter. She was captain of the swim team and actively volunteered with South Davis Community Hospital. Her father is an Air Force veteran.

McKenna Cox graduated from Mountain View High School and will be attending the Air Force Academy. McKenna was a student body officer and a member of the National Honor Society. A great example of a student athlete, she was Academic All-State in soccer and was the captain of the basketball team, the softball team, and the cross-country team. She organized food drives for the Utah Food Bank and care packages for the military.

William Estes, from Dugway High School and attending the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, was a National Honor Society and participated in ice hockey, baseball, track and field, and was Academic All-State in basketball. He was also band president and participated in the JROTC. His father is currently serving in the Army.

Russell Landes will be attending the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

Russell attended the American Leadership Academy, where he was student body president. He was captain of the wrestling team and also participated on the football and track teams. He also earned his Eagle Scout award.

Benjamin Lemon, from Bountiful High School and the University of Utah, will be attending the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Benjamin was a member of the National Honor Society and earned his Eagle Scout. He was captain of the football team and participated in wrestling and the track and field team. His brother also served honorably in the armed services, where he was wounded in the service of his country.

Thomas Maddox, a graduate of Juan Diego Catholic High School, will be attending the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He was an outstanding scholar and captain of the lacrosse and ice hockey teams. He has over 75 hours of community service. He was student government class officer and founder and president of the Patriots Club.

One of my greatest honors as a Senator has been to get to know and nominate each of these young men and women. I know that our Nation's future is bright in the hands of these exemplary individuals who have distinguished themselves amongst their peers.●

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR NATHAN KLINE

● Mr. TOOMEY. Madam President, I wish to honor the remarkable service of a great Pennsylvanian to our Nation's defense and its veterans. Maj. Nathan Kline, U.S. Air Force, Retired, served for nearly half a century in our country's Armed Forces. After enlisting in the U.S. Army Air Forces in 1942, he served in highly hazardous positions as a bombardier and navigator on a B-26 Marauder. His 65 air combat missions included the D-day invasion and the Battle of the Bulge. Incredibly, he survived after his aircraft was shot down twice during the campaign in Europe. For his actions, he earned the Distinguished Flying Cross and 10 Air Medals. After the war, the French Ambassador welcomed Major Kline into the coveted Legion d'Honneur for his service in the liberation of France.

Major Kline did not seek a quiet postwar civilian life. He continued his military service in the Reserves while working in support of the veterans' community. His advocacy on behalf of veterans and their families became a lifelong endeavor. Major Kline was a founding member of the Lehigh Valley Military Affairs Council. In this capacity, he raised funds to provide scholarships to deployed servicemembers' children, managed assembly and shipment of care packages and helped veterans to find employment.

In honoring Major Kline, we recognize his commitment to service during times of war and peace.